

# Positive Mental Health: A Key for Entrepreneurs' Success

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In a hadith from Ubaidullah bin Mihshan, the Prophet SAW said,

“Whoever in the morning is safe in soul, healthy in body, and has enough food for the day, it is as if the world had been gathered for him.”

(Tirmidzi 2346, Ibn Majah 4280)

According to World Health Organization (WHO) (2022) mental health refers to a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities and potential, be able to learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. In addition, the Ministry of Health (KKM) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which an individual is aware of his own capabilities, can handle stress well and work productively, and is able to contribute to his family and society (Berita Harian, 2023). In a nutshell, mental health can affect the routine of life and work, thoughts, feelings, and behavior, as well as individual actions, communication with others, quality of life, and productivity. The above hadith highlights the importance of mental health in daily life, and the phrase 'as if the world had been gathered for him' shows how a positive and good management of mental health brings a wholesome happiness to an individual.

Meanwhile entrepreneurs are known as avid innovators who invent new resources in society, owning value; striving for technological progress, transform social and mental reality, building new connections and risks' takers (Kargapolova et al., 2023, Pradana et al., 2023). Frequently dressed up as an exciting, fast-paced career path, entrepreneurship can also be stressful and bearing on one's mental health. According to a study by the National Institute of Mental Health, 72% of entrepreneurs are directly or indirectly affected by mental health issues compared to only 48% of non-entrepreneurs; and 49% of entrepreneurs deal with mental health issues directly while just 32% of others experienced them (Murray-Serter, 2020).

In addition, a study done by Freeman et al. (2019) by examining the prevalence and co-occurrence of five psychiatric conditions among 242 entrepreneurs found that entrepreneurs stated they were facing depression (30%), ADHD (29%), anxiety (27%), addiction (12%), and bipolar disorder (11%). Table 1 shows the result regarding lifetime prevalence of mental conditions among entrepreneurs.

**Table 1: Lifetime Prevalence of Mental Conditions Among Entrepreneurs**

Mental Health Disorder	Explanation of Terms	Entrepreneurs
Depression	Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest.	30%
ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition that affects people's behavior, such as may seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse.	29%
Anxiety	Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness.	27%
Addiction	Addiction is a neuropsychological disorder characterized by a persistent and intense urge to use a drug or engage in a behavior that produces natural reward, despite substantial harm and other negative consequences.	12%
Bipolar	Bipolar disorder (formerly called manic-depressive illness or manic depression) is a mental illness that causes unusual shifts in a person's mood, energy, activity levels, and concentration. These shifts can make it difficult to carry out day-to-day tasks.	11%

Source: Adapted from Freeman et al., 2019

Freeman et al. (2019) also found that mental health issues impacted 72% of entrepreneurs, with 49% having a personal history of mental health challenges and 23% of asymptomatic entrepreneurs having a family history of such issues. Additionally, 32% of entrepreneurs reported having two or more mental health conditions, and 18% reported three or more conditions.

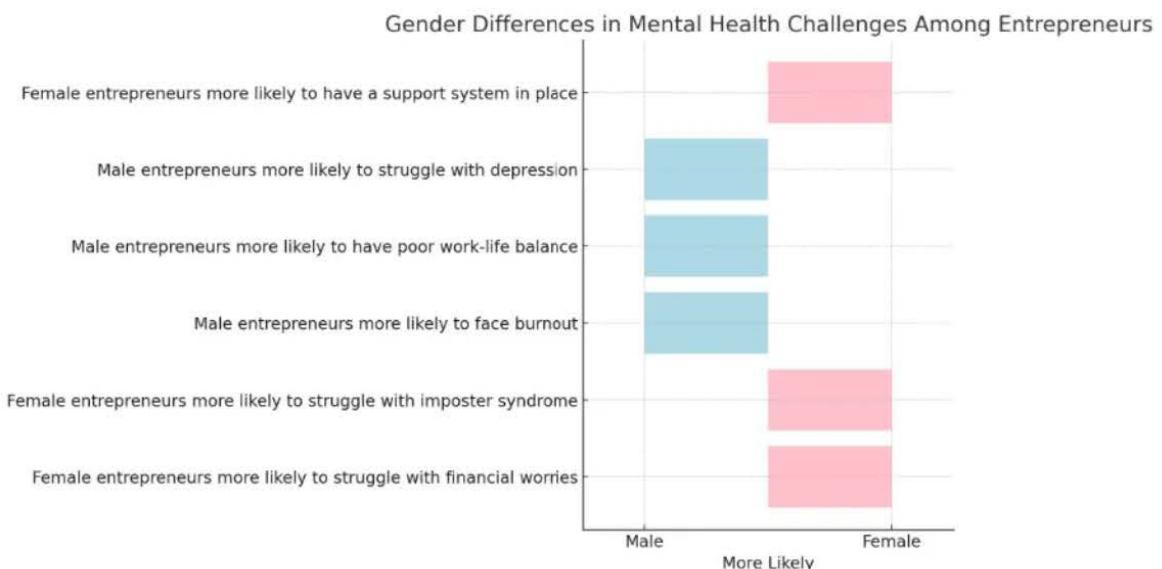
Meanwhile, the findings from a survey conducted of 227 entrepreneurs representing 46 countries by Domzalski and Andre (2024) regarding mental health is divided into three categories represented by Figure 1: Mental health challenges among entrepreneurs, Figure 2: Gender differences in mental health challenges among entrepreneurs, and Figure 3: Age differences in mental challenges among entrepreneurs.



**Figure 1: Mental Health Challenges Among Entrepreneurs**

Source: Adapted from Domzalski and Andre, 2024

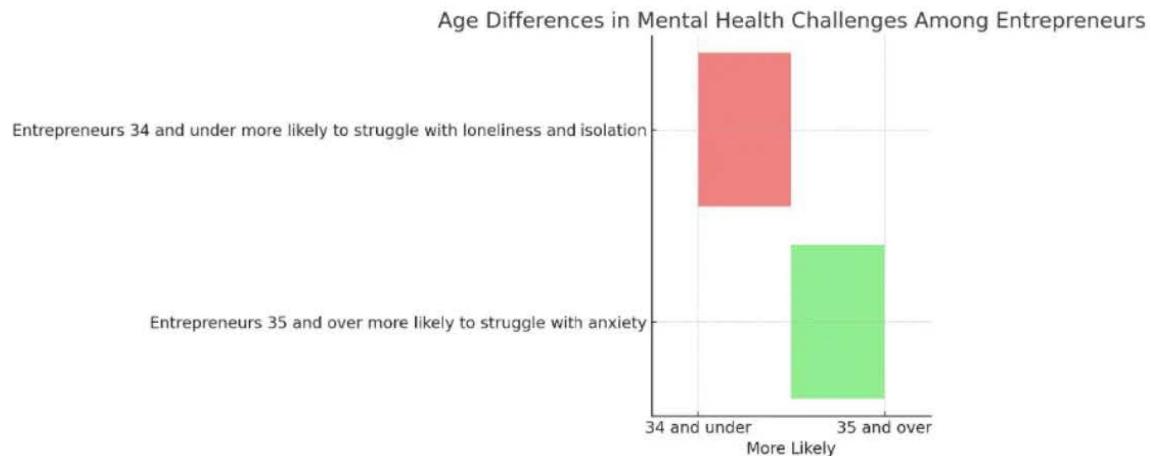
Figure 1 shows that 87.7% of entrepreneurs struggle with at least one mental health issue, 50.2% of entrepreneurs struggle with anxiety, 34.4% of entrepreneurs suffer burnout, 26.9% of entrepreneurs have a poor work-life balance, more entrepreneurs said they were worried about mental health than physical health, 45.8% of entrepreneurs struggle with high stress, 21.6% of entrepreneurs experience insomnia or other sleep disorders, 26.9% of entrepreneurs struggle with loneliness and isolation, and only 18.5% of respondents said they were aware of mental health resources specifically tailored for entrepreneurs and business owners.



**Figure 2: Gender Differences in Mental Health Challenges Among Entrepreneurs**

Source: Adapted from Domzalski and Andre, 2024

Figure 2 summarized the findings regarding gender differences in facing mental health challenges among the entrepreneurs. The study shows that female entrepreneurs are more likely than males to struggle with financial worries, to conflict with imposter syndrome, and to have a support system in place. While male entrepreneurs are more likely than females to face burnout, have poor work-life balance, and struggle with depression.



**Figure 3: Age Differences in Mental Challenges Among Entrepreneurs**

Source: Adapted from Domzalski and Andre, 2024

Figure 3 shows that entrepreneurs aged 35 and over are more likely to struggle with anxiety than those 34 and under. Moreover, entrepreneurs aged 34 and under are more likely to struggle with loneliness and isolation than those 35 and over.

Positive mental health is a key success factor for an entrepreneur to do business and live well daily. Several benefits can be obtained from positive and good mental health, such as greater ability to cope with stress and other mental health issues, boosting self-esteem, maintaining healthier relationships, leading to a higher productivity level, a better quality of life, etc. (Plumptre, 2024; Anwar, 2021). This article will discuss the benefits of positive and good (well-managed) mental health for an entrepreneur to have a well-balanced work-life and a higher quality of life.

A positive and good mental health management enable entrepreneurs to:

### **1. Have greater ability to cope with stress and other mental health issues**

The life of an entrepreneur is full of joys and sorrows. Starting a business, maintaining a business, seeking new opportunities, new clients, and new suppliers, and making sure the business floats well for a long time are not simple tasks. An entrepreneur's life is all about a combination of positive and negative experiences. These experiences can lead to the emergence of one or more mental health issues, such as stress, anxiety, and burnout. Domzalski and Andre (2024) stated that among their findings, 87.7% of entrepreneurs struggle with at least one mental health issue and 45.8% of entrepreneurs struggle with high stress.

An entrepreneur with good mental health can handle life's everyday stresses. He or she will be more productive and more motivated in doing business, thus providing a significant

contribution to society in terms of employment and improving the economic state of the community. There are few ways suggested for managing stress, such as seeking therapy, regular exercise (yoga or low-impact exercise), enough daily rest and sleep, meditation, maintaining a positive outlook on life, building resilience, and learning to cope and communicate effectively (Anwar, 2021; Plumtre, 2024). When mental and emotional conditions are at top levels, the challenges of business and personal life can be easier to overcome with healthier coping mechanisms.

## **2. Boost their self-esteem and have positive self-image**

Entrepreneurs with strong mental health are more likely to concentrate on their positive characteristics. Feeling good about oneself will make them look at any challenges positively and tackle the problems with stable and mature thinking. Moreover, they will work on issues that need fixing and usually have long-term goals of prosperous business and personal life. Being optimistic, avoiding self-blame, setting and achieving goals in business and personal life, and acquiring skills and knowledge will help the entrepreneur to become a positive person.

Higher self-esteem and having a positive self-image contribute to higher self-confidence, which can be a good indicator of a healthy mental state (Plumtre, 2024). Confident entrepreneurs who can face business challenges with positive results will be more trusted by the parties involved, such as customers, suppliers, and investors.

## **3. Maintain healthier business and personal relationships**

Entrepreneurship can be fulfilling and increase wellbeing, but it is also highly stressful and diminishes wellbeing (Stephan et al., 2023). Balancing work and personal life have become an important issue nowadays. Life as entrepreneurs often demands long hours and a considerable time commitment, which can make it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Domzalski and Andre (2024) state that 26.9% of entrepreneurs have a poor work-life balance.

Concentrating on business 24/7 without taking enough breaks and relaxation will lead to anxiety, burnout, and other issues related to mental health. Therefore, it's crucial for an entrepreneur to take time to prepare a plan to priorities and manage time effectively. Planning should include scheduling time for business purposes, family, and for oneself. Every now and then take a break and relax. Enjoying life while doing business will make the entrepreneurs happy and healthy.

In conclusion, skills and knowledge to manage and achieve positive and good mental health need to be sought and learned. Entrepreneurs need to have healthy thinking, goals, and plans to keep them energized and motivated, be involved in healthy routine activities, and maintain social connections to stay associated with family and friends, thus able to avoid having any mental health issues. According to Anwar (2021), good mental health allows people to face life's challenges with resilience, establish strong and profound relationships, and make decisions that outline a positive future for themselves and their communities. When entrepreneurs are mentally healthy, they appreciate life and look forward to being happy and prosperous in business and personal life. Having positive and good mental health enables entrepreneurs to be imaginative, creative, and ready to take upon challenges faced by them confidently and successfully.

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